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INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0189

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0099

RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANTANANARIVO 000676

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/EPS AND AF/E - MBEYZEROV

TREASURY FOR FBOYE

PARIS FOR WBAIN

LONDON FOR PLORD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/25/2019

TAGS: PGOV ASEC MA

SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: UNEXPECTED CALM AT HOME DURING TGV'S
UPS AND DOWNS AT UNGA

REF: ANTANANARIVO 657 AND 662

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF DOVIE HOLLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

¶11. (C) Summary: Contrary to earlier expectations and calls for demonstrations, Madagascar's opposition movements have been quiet this week, probably out of respect for the upcoming International Contact Group (ICG) meeting being organized by the African Union to put pressure on the country's illegal transition leaders to form a consensual transition government. The October 6 ICG will have high-level attendance by the AU, France, and, possibly, the EU. Meanwhile the press has made hay about de facto transition leader Andry "TGV" Rajoelina's trip to New York to attend the UNGA, speculating whether or not such events imply an improvement of the pariah regime's diplomatic relations. Pro-TGV papers have run articles and full-page ads portraying his New York visit as a major breakthrough. However, TGV's sudden removal from the UNGA speaking agenda September 24 has countered that claim and aroused speculation that the SADC, AU, or the US intervened to block his participation. Keeping TGV from speaking while at UNGA would improve the climate here for a fruitful return to negotiations. End summary.

Opposition Silenced by Chissano?

¶12. (C) Madagascar's three main opposition factions had announced plans to hold large demonstrations beginning from September 19, but have not done so. Following the African Union's announcement on September 21 that an International Contact Group (ICG) meeting would take place in Madagascar October 6, Former President Zafy Albert said on September 22 that his faction would refrain from demonstrations prior to the ICG meeting. However, Zafy, along with Ravalomanana faction leader Fetison, have requested permission -- which was reportedly (and surprisingly) granted September 24 -- to hold a meeting in the city's main stadium on September 26 to explain the terms of the Maputo Charter to their supporters. Post suspects that ICG lead mediator Chissano directly requested the opposition to maintain calm prior to the October 6 meeting. The opposition, who are relying on the backing of the international community -- perhaps indicative of their limited ability to mobilize the tired public -- are eager for the high-level ICG meeting to take place to pressure the de facto regime into compromise.

ICG Attendance

¶3. (SBU) The African Union will send AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping and Commissioner for Peace and Security Ramtane Lamamra to participate in the ICG meeting. French Cooperation Minister Alain Joyandet, along with representatives from the Foreign Ministry and perhaps the Presidency, will participate. The British plan to send their Ambassador resident in Mauritius, and perhaps a representative from London. The European Union is considering sending its new Cooperation Commissioner Karel De Gucht. Russia will be represented by its local Ambassador. The mediators from the UN (Drame), SADC (Chissano), AU (Ouedraogo), and the Francophonie (Kodjo) will also attend. Post has informed local ICG members informally that the USG will be represented by Ambassador Phil Carter from AF, and Ambassador Marquardt. We recommend formal notification to the AU in Addis of the composition of the US delegation and their current titles.

TGV in New York

¶4. (C) There has been extensive coverage in the Malagasy media all this week of illegal transition regime leader Andry "TGV" Rajoelina's trip to New York to attend the UN General Assembly. The HAT has run full-page color ads in friendly papers with smiling photos of TGV meeting Ping and Kadhafi and sitting in front of the Madagascar tent in the meeting room, clearly aimed at painting a picture of increasing international recognition; his exclusion from President Obama's Tuesday lunch, and the absence of any meeting with UNSYG Ban Ki-Moon, go unmentioned in most papers. Malagasy who are following political events are questioning why the

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USG allowed Rajoelina to travel to the U.S. and why the UNGA invited and allowed him to participate in events there if the transition regime is not diplomatically recognized. Despite explanations that the trip does not imply recognition by either the US or UN, most Malagasy do not read events in that way. Late on the 24th, however, national radio and other media reported that the speech had been postponed, while web media reported that TGV had been removed from the agenda. Some headlines on the 25th reported that Rajoelina had been "censored" or refused access at the UN, with speculation that the removal of TGV from the speakers' list resulted from actions taken by the AU, SADC, or the US. One web news service argued that the ban was the result of the US representative's statement at the Human Rights Council in Geneva on September 22 demanding that the transition leaders "resign and hold elections" (see septel). Post received email communication from USUN indicating that TGV was not on the agenda for September 25, but the UN website still reflects that he will speak during the afternoon session September 25. If TGV is allowed to speak at UNGA, it will no doubt bolster his self-confidence, strengthen his political position here, and make the relaunching of negotiations here towards consensus all the more difficult.

Comment

¶5. (C) Although TGV told Ambassador Marquardt in private prior to his departure to New York that he would replace his prime minister with a consensus candidate upon his return, he is likely to make good on that promise only if the international community maintains strong and steady pressure to do so. A continued insistence by TGV on retaining the top two posts in the transition government -- still his public position -- thus continues to threaten the renewal of fruitful negotiations. End comment.

MARQUARDT